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Security Council

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Wednesday, 10 June 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2015/378)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2015/378)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/378, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mulet.

Mr. Mulet (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for this new opportunity to make a statement before the Council. As you just stated, Sir, the subject of the meeting this morning is the situation in Darfur and the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/378) on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which was transmitted to the members of the Council on 26 May. My statement will focus on two main points. First, I will make a few general observations on the situation in Darfur and the activities of UNAMID; then, I will weigh in on the process of drafting a withdrawal strategy for UNAMID and related recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General.

(*spoke in English*)

The report before the Council analyses a very serious security situation, including the continued need for substantial humanitarian assistance in Darfur and the limited progress in the peace process. In addition, it describes a deeply concerning increase in violent attacks by armed assailants against UNAMID and humanitarian personnel. Most worrisome is the devastating impact that the security situation has had on innocent civilians and the obstacles that violence has created for their protection and for humanitarian operations.

The second phase of the Government's military offensive, called Operation Decisive Summer, has resulted in high numbers of newly displaced people. Humanitarian organizations estimate that at least 78,000 people have been newly displaced by conflict in Darfur this year alone. In addition, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has received reports of some 130,000 additional internally displaced persons (IDPs), but has not yet been able to verify that. Most of those unverified IDPs are said to be in the Jebel Marra area, where the heaviest fighting has been taking place and which is mostly inaccessible to humanitarian partners. There is also significant concern about reports of indiscriminate attacks against civilians and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

In addition, the current year has seen intercommunal conflicts leading to periodic outbreaks of violence. Beyond the resource conflicts that ignited this violence, the destabilizing impact of broader political tensions and numerous paramilitary groups and militias, the proliferation of small arms and the manner in which local authorities have responded to insecurity have all contributed to aggravating the situation. Crime is also a major source of insecurity, with various armed persons taking advantage of the relative absence of security forces in most areas to attack civilians. This worsening security environment in parts of Darfur continues to have significant implications for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and UNAMID.

Despite the difficult operating environment, including movement restrictions and other obstructions imposed by the belligerent parties, UNAMID remains resolute in its commitment to deliver on its three strategic priorities.

As part of the continued implementation of the strategic review, the United Nations Secretariat continues to work with the mission's leadership, the African Union and other partners to ensure that peacekeepers in Darfur are able to carry out their mandate effectively and efficiently. The adequate responses by units when attacked and the proactive

approach shown when protecting IDPs are indicators of continuous improvements as a result of the requested changes in attitude, robustness and training.

On the civilian side, the focus has remained on the streamlining of personnel and the process of transferring some of UNAMID's mandated tasks to the United Nations country team. An analysis has been conducted to identify which of these tasks could be carried out by UNAMID, which should be implemented jointly with the United Nations country team, and those in which the team could have a comparative advantage. The operational plan for the implementation of this process is being developed jointly by UNAMID and the country team and will be based on specific benchmarks, taking into account certain preconditions, including the mobilization of adequate financial resources and the necessary support from the Government of the Sudan.

With regard to UNAMID's achievements, I will limit my remarks to the protection of civilians, which has received sustained attention and effort by the mission over the last few months.

UNAMID has continued to effectively implement its protection-of-civilians mandate through the provision of physical protection, logistical and security support to humanitarian operations, the promotion of a protective environment, and local conflict mediation. In this context, the mission has revised its protection-of-civilians strategy, which is now being implemented by its relevant components.

The most significant achievements over the reporting period were related to the establishment of protective areas within or in the vicinity of team sites and instances in which peacekeepers repelled or prevented attacks against civilians, conducted robust patrols to affected villages and escorted humanitarian missions during intercommunal clashes. Protection committees were also formed with IDPs to coordinate relevant protection activities in collaboration with humanitarian personnel.

Let me turn now to the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID. In February 2015, a joint working group was established between the United Nations, the African Union and the Government of the Sudan to respond to the request of the Security Council in its resolution 2173 (2014) for the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID, as well as to address the particular concerns raised by the Government of the Sudan in this regard. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, following a field visit and two rounds of discussions, the Working Group has not yet produced a conclusion, and consultations will resume in the coming weeks. However, during the meetings, the African Union-United Nations team explored the idea of a two-pronged approach with the Government.

First, UNAMID's proposed exit strategy is based on the achievement of the mission's benchmarks, as endorsed by the Council last year and premised on a political solution to the conflict based on direct talks between the parties, starting with a cessation of hostilities.

The proposed exit strategy is also based on the gradual and phased withdrawal of UNAMID's force from Western Darfur, where there have not been any major activities by armed groups or intercommunal fighting in the past two years. The gradual reduction in UNAMID's presence in Western Darfur would be complemented by a progressive handover of its tasks to the Government and the United Nations country team, as the necessary conditions for a consolidation of security in the State are created by the national authorities. This approach would reflect the mission's efforts to concentrate on its three strategic priorities while further demonstrating flexibility and efficiency by reducing its size. As part of this, UNAMID would also close three other team sites in Northern and Southern Darfur that, in accordance with the findings of the recently concluded military capability study, are assessed to be in areas that do not necessitate the mission's presence.

(*spoke in French*)

Allow me in conclusion to make one last remark. Resolving the conflict in Darfur now more than ever requires joint efforts on the part of the Security Council, the African Union and the international community as a whole in order to make the belligerent parties understand that there cannot be a military solution. The suffering endured by the people of Darfur has lasted for far too long and must cease immediately.

Despite the encouraging progress made in the negotiations in 2014, the prospect for a lasting solution to the crisis seems to be but wishful thinking in the current context. The relaunching of direct negotiations and national dialogue must remain the priority.

While reiterating our thanks to the Sudanese authorities for their efforts to achieve better cooperation with UNAMID, I should like to stress the fact that the

United Nations and the African Union have no objective other than the well-being of the population, an end to the violence and an negotiated end to the crisis, in order to being a process of harmonious development in Darfur and, following that, the entire country of the Sudan. We know that the Government of the Republic of the Sudan also shares this goal. That is why the preparation of an exit strategy for UNAMID must be linked to the results obtained vis-à-vis that goal and a specific improvement in the situation on the ground.

When our efforts in this area have borne fruit and the population has been freed from fear and violence, that will be the time for us to disengage. In the meantime, we must continue our cooperation on the basis of mutual trust. That is why, in common accord with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Secretariat of the United Nations asks that the mandate of UNAMID be extended for an additional year, until June 2016.

The President: I thank Mr. Mulet for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Truth be told, I had prepared a positive, optimistic statement; that was the spirit that guided me when I was coming to visit the Council. However, before I read my statement, I have to say that I find myself forced to comment on the first part of Mr. Mulet's briefing, on the situation in Darfur during the reported period.

He said that the situation was very dangerous; that is an inaccurate description. The deterioration in the situation and the number of individuals displaced as a result of tribal violence was presented as a situation that had arisen as a result of the violence. But there was an armed group that crossed State borders into another State. Rather than calling the attention of the Security Council to this fact or referring to an attack on the very sovereignty of a State, Mr. Mulet told us only about the consequences of this incident, to which we had to respond.

That is why the violence took place. I recognize that there is tribal violence in Darfur. It has been happening for a long time as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons around Darfur. It is a long story, with the first cases of tribal violence taking place, according to this report and Mr. Mulet's remarks, in 1952, while we were still under British colonial rule. That tribal violence led to the displacement of persons at the time, but the Government intervened and contained the situation.

However, we should not confuse tribal violence and its impact with what we are referring to here today. We should not depict it as an open conflict between rebel groups and the Sudanese Government. This situation is being contained, even if there remain a few pockets of instability in some areas. It is well known that there are active groups.

Mr. Mulet also referred to the Operation Decisive Summer, which he characterized as destabilizing security. This again is the wrong way of depicting the situation. In December 2013 and January and February 2014, activity undertaken by the remnants of rebel groups in Darfur, including seven offensives, meant that we were simply forced to respond to the situation through the Rapid Support Forces, as part of Operation Decisive Summer, which we launched solely as a response to the attacks of the armed groups. In other words, the situation is being wrongly depicted here. We acted to impose stability on Darfur. Operation Decisive Summer did not destabilize the region — quite the opposite.

And when Mr. Mulet refers to the obstacles that have hampered the work of the Mission — the Secretary-General states that during the reporting period 595 visas were approved while only 7 visas had been suspended — I wonder here, quite openly, what sort of obstacles the Assistant Secretary-General is referring to.

The African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is an African Union operation and one we hold dear. We certainly do not want to stem or hamper any of its actions. We wish to cooperate with it and that is all I wanted to clarify here and now, in order to ensure that the Council fully understands what is actually taking place, the reasons why we have deployed the Operation Decisive Summer. It is an operation that should be praised because it has contributed to stability in Darfur.

I return now to my statement, and of course I would like to start, Mr. President, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month. We are confident that your presidency of the Council, Sir, will provide a different dimension to the way in which the issue of Darfur is tackled, given that you are fraternal country, linked to the Sudan through a long history of relations. We would like to thank the

Assistant Secretary-General for his briefing. It is the first part of the briefing that we disagree with, as I said previously.

We thank Mr. Abiodun Oluremi Bashua, Deputy Joint Special Representative for UNAMID. We are honoured by his presence during the Council's deliberations, all the more so since these deliberations coincide with consultations under way on the draft resolution on the extension of the UNAMID mandate.

I turn to the Council at a time when the Sudan finds itself on the eve of what stands to be a very promising phase, one replete with hope. President Al-Bashir won the elections in February. He garnered an unprecedented number of votes and was re-elected for another term of office, which is mentioned in paragraph 38 of the report of the Secretary-General. The report also referred to the elections that took place in Darfur, which unfolded in a peaceful manner without any security-related incidents.

I am sure that the Council followed the inaugural address of President Al-Bashir before the National Assembly in which he referred to an amnesty and called upon all groups bearing arms to engage in the path of reason and become involved in the comprehensive national peace dialogue. Moved by the spirit, the new Government of the Sudan expects more decisive action to resume the national dialogue without excluding anyone. We also hope that the Security Council — and the international community more broadly speaking — will assume their responsibilities with respect to those who have rejected the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and, in keeping with the address made by the President of the Republic, we intend to bolster our cooperation with the United Nations and with all of its bodies and agencies in order to complete the reconstruction and stabilization process in Darfur.

What should be avoided is wrongful depictions of the reality in the region, because that undermines the spirit of cooperation, specifically with the United Nations entities present in Darfur, with a view to finalizing the process of rebuilding and reconstructing the area, including resuming the mediation processes and fostering reconciliation between the tribes to put an end to the senseless tribal violence in Darfur and ensure that efforts are focused on development and on the rehabilitation of the area.

Turning now to UNAMID's exit strategy, we expect that the draft resolution that will extend the mandate of the operation will include a number of clear paragraphs on that issue. We would remind the Council that paragraph 7 of resolution 2173 (2014) is quite clear and direct in its request that the Secretary-General review the operations of the Mission and its achievements to implement the strategic priorities in cooperation with the African Union and all stakeholders, including, of course, the United Nations.

We are cooperating fully with the working group. This is not a new request. The Council adopted this strategy in resolution 2173 (2014), in which it renewed the mandate and included a number of proposals on exit strategies and ways to transfer responsibility from UNAMID to the Sudan country team, as a great deal of progress has been made in implementing the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. The pockets of remaining armed groups that are attempting from time to time to carry out military activities, to hamper and impede the remaining provisions of the Doha Document and to put an end the exit strategy leads us to ask the following question: Why are those groups continuing to carry out such actions? Furthermore, other components of those armed groups are preventing the overall return of displaced persons in the five federal states of Darfur. What the armed groups want is to have the refugees remain in the camps so that they have a pretext to continue to bear arms.

As we said in previous statements, in no way have we referred to an immediate exit strategy for UNAMID. We have not done so. Rather, we said that we are currently implementing a gradual strategy in cooperation with the African Union and the United Nations that involves immediately reducing the military component of UNAMID and other components in areas where security has been restored and which are stable. I am referring now to East Darfur and three areas in Central Darfur.

Those drawdown operations are continuing gradually in other regions, based on benchmarks that we have all agreed to. That is why I would like to state in this Chamber that our institutions stand ready to undertake the operations necessary to restore security, and we call on the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of its country team to ensure that it is in a position to take on the operations that have been transferred from UNAMID, in accordance with resolution 2173 (2014).

In assessing the security situation in Darfur, we should distinguish between the tribal conflicts that have always occurred in the region and other conflicts.

There are no more open armed conflicts between the rebel groups and the Government, with the exception of a few pockets of resistance carrying out very limited sabotage operations. It is incorrect to speak of open conflict with such groups except, as I just mentioned, with the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which crossed our borders on 26 April with the aim of carrying out that kind of destructive activity. Our Rapid Support Forces responded at the time, but apart from that there have been no open conflicts with the other armed groups. As for tribal violence, however, that has always existed in Darfur, as I have said, and we have all seen the efforts the Government of the Sudan has made to contain that violence and deal with its underlying causes. The Government has been able to use local tribal chiefs to achieve a number of reconciliations between tribes, and those efforts continue.

The issue of displaced persons should be addressed within the framework of development efforts, and to that end the Government of the Sudan needs support through the lifting of unfair unilateral sanctions, and calls on donors to continue their assistance efforts by implementing the Doha Document. The tribal conflicts result simply from social causes and development issues, and the best way to deal with them would be to lift the sanctions and forgive our debt, which would help us to resolve the conflicts, which arise over issues such as water rights and pasturage, which are prevalent throughout Africa, including the Sahel region.

That is why we reject paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report, concerning the incidents in the Kass region. The report distorts the truth, and we have already spoken of the incident, which was a twofold rather than a single one. The first was on 23 April, when five members of a raiding group seized a UNAMID vehicle near the Kass water point; the second involved an operation pursuing the group that had seized the vehicle, in which various groups fired on the inhabitants of Zaghawa, even though they had raised white flags, killing two innocent civilians and injuring several more. The vehicle was recovered by the Sudanese armed groups following a clash with those who had seized it, and it was restored to UNAMID.

We also have reservations about paragraph 28 of the report, which contains incorrect information regarding the evacuation of an Ethiopian peacekeeper who was injured in the Mukhjar area. We once again offer our condolences to our brother Government of Ethiopia and to the family of the deceased. We treated him as if he was one of our own Sudanese soldiers. It appears that when he fell from an observation tower, his head hit a metal container. His injuries were very bad, but he was evacuated by airlift thanks to military intelligence and approval. Unfortunately, this occurred at the same time as the operation in which the Rapid Support Forces clashed with JEM as it crossed our borders in the Nakhara area, which is not far from the Mukhjar region.

Again, we offer our condolences and reiterate our readiness to cooperate with the United Nations and its entities in Darfur, including UNAMID. We want to facilitate the work of that very African operation. The Sudan is an African country and an integral part of Africa, and no one here in the Council can say that we are trying to hinder UNAMID's operations or put obstacles in its way. On the contrary, we greatly value the security and safety of the Mission and all its members, and, needless to say, we support the facilitation of its efforts. That is why last week, when the Rapid Support Forces recovered five seized vehicles and returned them to UNAMID, we clearly demonstrated our willingness to cooperate.

At the same time, we should be implementing the gradual and flexible exit strategy that was agreed to by all sides. We would like to send the message to those who have found themselves in the camps that they should begin to prepare to return to their homes, take up their former daily activities and lead normal lives again. The mere launching of the exit strategy will send a message to the rebel leaders who have rejected the Doha Document to set aside their doubts and hesitation, listen to the voice of reason and become involved again in the process of peace and reconstruction, especially in the light of the amnesty declaration and the assurances given by the President of our Republic in his most recent address to Parliament. We expect a technical decision on the renewal of the Mission's mandate, particularly the paragraphs concerning the exit strategy from the regions that we have agreed on within the framework of the working group. Those include the states of Eastern Darfur, as well as three regions of Um Kadada, Tulus and Malha in Central Darfur.

I would again like to touch on the paragraphs in the report that state that the Government of the Sudan has used banned weapons in some areas. That information has not been confirmed and should therefore not be presented to the Council as such. It is not true. It cannot refer to the Rapid Support Forces, which are

flexible, lightly armed troops who do not need heavy weaponry, as everyone knows, which is why we reject those allegations. I reiterate that we are at a stage where we can be far more open than we may have been in the past, especially in the light of the amnesty assurances our President has announced for the leaders of the groups that are still armed. We are on the verge of a phase in which we will need the Council's assistance and collaboration. We will spare no effort to cooperate with the United Nations and its entities, and we ask the Council to send the right message to those armed groups that are still reluctant to become involved in the political process, in order to encourage them to join in the peace process.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.